DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 123 772 EA 008 328

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TITLE Some Alternatives for Alternative C[illegible]la.
PUB DATE Apr 76
NOTE 34p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, California, April 19-23, 1976)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Conceptual Schemes; Curriculum Development; *Educational Alternatives; Educational Innovation; Elementary Secondary Education; *Experimental Curriculum; Individualized Curriculum; *Literature Reviews; *Models
IDENTIFIERS *Grannis School Model

ABSTRACT

This paper examines current practices and recent literature in the area of educational alternatives and concludes that the alternative curricula movement has failed to provide a broad range of curricular alternatives that may be selected to fit the needs and interests of individual students and teachers. The authors argue that a theoretical and practical basis for differentiating curricular alternatives is needed, and they suggest that Grannis's model of "family," "factory," and "corporate" schools provides a useful theoretical basis. The second half of the paper explicates Grannis's model and discusses its implications for curricular alternatives in terms of such practical considerations as school operations, school organization, and educational evaluation. (Author/JG)

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SOME ALTERNATIVES FOR ALTERNATIVE CURRICULA

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Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, California, April, 1976.

EA 008 328

An increasingly major issue in curriculum literature during recent years has been the development and implementation of so-called "alternative" forms of curricula. The rise of this issue probably represents a healthy tendency within the literature and within curriculum practice, particularly to the extent that prevailing theory and practice have been based on a relatively narrow set of assumptions and norms. Nonetheless, our selective review of the existing literature dealing with alternative curricula and our observations of schools and of curriculum projects ostensibly implementing such alternatives have convinced us that serious shortcomings exist within current efforts to make sense of and to operationalize alternative curricula. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to urge the establishment on a sound basis of authentic curricular alternatives, by: (1) identifying the principal shortcomings in current curriculum literature and practice, (2) explicating the primary theoretical and practical considerations involved in sound and authentic curricular alternatives, and (3) elucidating these considerations in terms of an existing model of curricular alternatives.

The current literature on alternatives in education is voluminous and diverse. It appears in a wide variety of sources and ranges from broad issues on alternatives that have little or nothing to do with curricula to specific proposals for the implementation of numerous forms and kinds of curricula. By far the most common kind of alternative curriculum currently being espoused is some variation of "open" education. This literature varies greatly in quality.

At its worst it is little more than hortatory. For instance, advocates of open education and whatever forms of alternative curricula it might imply

often seem to assume that open education is automatically better than other kinds of education. This assumption is usually based on the notion that open education is more humane than whatever has gone before it and is therefore better for all students. Whatever truth there might be in such beliefs, it is clear, nontheless, that not everyone understands open education in the same way. Nor is there consensus about what particular alternative forms of curricula follow from what particular articles of belief about open education. Without such consensus, the insights contained in the best of the literature on curricular alternatives are not easy to discern amid the general clamor. In most projects involving alternative curricula that we have observed, in practice the burden thus falls on the teacher for bridging the gap between slogans and operational specifics. While some teachers use this burden as a stimulus to thought and an opportunity to exercise professional initiative in making decisions, others flounder. On one hand, teachers may embrace the beliefs and rhetoric of open education and yet maintain antithetical curricular practices. On the other hand, teachers may adopt open forms of curricular alternatives but with little or no insight into why these might be used.

We think, therefore, that in general terms there are four major shortcomings in current efforts to promote alternative curricula, although not every author, curriculum developer, or teacher is guilty of any one or all of these. The first of these shortcomings is the failure to link proposals for alternative curricula with thought about educational purposes. For instance, alternatives are often negatively based; that is, they are reactions to a prevailing curriculum but are not rooted in careful consideration of what schooling should be for. Often some very reasonable operational specifics are offered, but without a carefully considered view of epistemology, of human nature, of the role of schooling within society, or of the broad range of human purposes education serves.

The second of these shortcomings is the failure adequately to differentiate alternatives. Curricula which on the surface appear to be very different may in actuality be very similar; those which appear to be similar may in actuality be different. When curricula are not adequately differentiated, not only can much confusion about programs ensue but comparative research may be conducted on a faulty basis (Charters and Jones, 1973), and research findings may be misleading.

The third of these shortcomings is the failure to offer more than one real alternative to a prevailing curriculum. Clearly, curricular alternatives can be differentiated with more specificity than "open" or "closed", than "humane" or "inhumane", than "child-centered" or "subject-centered". When participants in projects employing alternative curricula have only two options, the range of effective choice which might be open to them is considerably diminished.

The fourth of these shortcomings is the failure to provide means by which alternatives may be made available for both students and teachers. While some cognizance has been taken of the idea that students differ greatly in their desires and needs for structured environments and specified outcomes, almost no attention has been paid to the same problem for teachers. How well prepared professionally are they for curricular alternatives? To what extent does participation in different alternatives require differences in beliefs and value systems? Such questions, especially for teachers, have not been adequately discussed in the literature.

A number of unfortunate consequences arise from these shortcomings. The establishment of single, negatively based alternatives without adequate consideration of basic issues includes the implicit denial that curricula exist along a continuum (hence, a denial of that upon which they can be differentiated). This denial often leads in turn to the erroneous and misleading classification of curricular forms and practices and thereby

creates the strong tendency for all practices (including "alternatives") to revert back to prevailing curricular norms. This tendency seems particularly pronounced when the prevailing curriculum is based on the technological assumptions implicit in the Tyler rationale. Additionally, since this kind of piecemeal assembly of curricular alternatives is seldom based on a real questioning of prevailing educational purposes, it seldom leads to the development of vision about educational purposes.[1] Curriculum policy, therefore, tends to remain piecemeal, and consequently, "new" curricular alternatives are displaced by ever newer, more fashionable alternatives, regardless of whether new curricula can be differentiated from old. Increasing credibility is thus lent to the oft-repeated charge that educators are faddists.

On a more prosaic level, few schools seem touched in any fundamental way. For instance, an alternative school or curriculum may supposedly be based on some form of "individualized" instruction. In fact, very few teachers or administrators in any American schools of today would be willing to admit that they do not individualize the programs of their students. However, the practical outcomes of individualization is often reflected only in the speed of students moving through institutionally selected objectives and materials. Or, students with reading problems are hurried through some sort of "mush" which does not adequately respond to either the needs of the subject, or the needs of students to use their minds. The form of this instruction is often similar for all students who are literate: preview assigned materials, pre-test, read materials, post-test, individual help, re-test. Large group instruction, group activities, and group projects

1. We are not suggesting that Joseph Schwab's now famous notion of "the practical" (with its espousal of "piecemeal" rearrangement of curricular elements) is faulty. We are suggesting that as yet "the practical" has not been adequately and intelligently incorporated into the alternative curricula movement.

are not "good", while for some kinds of learnings, at some times, for some students, they may represent "alternative" curricular forms which provide the most desirable kinds of experiences. On the other hand, the kind of individualized curriculum we have just described hardly seems a significant departure from what schools have always done and therefore seems an alternative in attenuated form only.

The open education movement itself seems to have created and may already be on the wane. It, like so many innovations before it, has not solved the problems it was supposed to solve and probably has not brought many curricular alternatives to many schools. It may have created more headaches (literally, in some very "open" environments) than it has alleviated. Yet, if open education embodies some kind of basic curriculum type that exists along a continuum, then it must be considered as valuable for some but not all teachers, for some but not all students, for some but not all of the time. This consideration means that any curricular alternative should be considered valuable only in terms of the specific use to which it is put consistent with the specific purpose for which it is meant. For instance, in reconsidering individualized instruction, one must not consider speed to be the only dimension on which individual students can be treated differently. One must also consider larger questions about what individual students might be like both in school and long after their years of formal schooling are behind them.

What we are suggesting is that the greatest overall failure of the current movement to promote open schools and alternative curricula (as reflected in the specific shortcomings we have noted) is the failure to provide individual students with a broad range of clearly differentiated curricular alternatives which may be freely chosen according to individual purposes. This is not to say that all alternatives and all purposes are

equally valuable; therefore, this is not to diminish the educator's crucial role in clarifying both alternatives and purposes and in offering guidance in making choices. Nor is this to say that alternative curricula can exist only in alternative schools. In fact we suggest that the best education tends to take place when alternative forms of curricula exist side-by-side within the same school, and even within the same classroom. Permitting this kind of diversity within one district is difficult enough for school administrators, yet we are advocating a further and more difficult step, that such diversity be encouraged, even demanded, within each school and classroom. Obviously, we welcome the kind of healthy diversity and pluralism that many educators now recommend and the educational, social, and political benefits that such diversity and pluralism may bring, but we think that efforts which promote them in attenuated form represent something less than total health.

In effect, then, in this paper we are urging educators to adopt a comprehensive view of the nature of educational purposes and their relationship to curricular alternatives, to develop a theoretical and practical basis for differentiating alternatives, to provide each student with a range of clearly differentiated alternatives, and to develop a rationale for how students and teachers may freely choose alternatives. While this paper focuses on the second of these four tasks, it touches on each of the other three.

Let us now illustrate some of the foregoing points and perhaps a few others by briefly and selectively reviewing some of the better literature on alternative curricula and open education.

Literature on Alternatives

Much of the literature is concerned with somewhat general description of basic but global characteristics of alternative curricula or open education. As such, this literature is meant primarily to familiarize readers with the parameters of these alternatives to traditional or conventional forms of schooling. For instance, Walberg and Thomas (1972) analyze the literature on open education and identify eight "themes" which emerge: provisioning of materials, humaneness, diagnosis, instruction, evaluation, professional growth, self-perception of teachers, and assumptions about children and the process of learning. This study clearly provides some valuable focal points for discerning alternatives in education but does not deal with alternative curricula per se. Glatthorn (1975) describes a wide variety of curricular patterns which exist in alternative schools, e.g., unstructured learning, open classrooms, skills exchange curricula, core, mini-courses, etc. While description of various patterns of curricular organization is valuable in its own right, Glatthorn does not suggest whether certain patterns themselves, or their use in alternative schools, or something else defines alternative curricula. Goodlad et al. (1975) provide a comprehensive view of the general movement toward alternatives in education, rooting the movement in some historical perspective, in a description of the current cultural milieu, and in prediction about the future. The greatest strength of this book perhaps is that it seriously questions prevailing educational purposes. However, it does not focus specifically on alternative curricula, nor explicate a model, although Goodlad's own four-part "typology of educational alternatives" of "common ends and common means," "common ends and alternative means," "alternative ends and alternative means," and "self-selected, open ends and means,

including the freedom of not deliberately choosing" (p. 13) is, as we shall note below, similar to how we would differentiate alternative curricula.

A second concern which dominates much of the literature is with the effects of open education. Contrary to the results of a number of studies which find advantages for open education in terms of affect, Wright (1975) reports traditional education as promoting both higher achievement and lower anxiety among elementary students. While these results are interesting, particularly since they raise questions about the demands "openness" may make on students, the study does not attempt to provide a well articulated model of open education nor of alternative curricular forms. Epstein and McPartland (1975) report small but significant advantages for open education, which they identify in terms of this definition: "an open environment school is one in which many alternative activities for students are permitted, in which alternatives available correspond to differences among students in their needs and interests, and in which students share responsibility for selecting assignments, supervising progress, and setting goals" (p. 2. Emphasis in the orginal). This definition is useful, we think, for it does begin to suggest a coherent relationship between open education and alternative curricular forms. Westbury (1973) suggests that while conventional classrooms permit teachers no real flexibility, they also are superior in terms of control of "coverage," "mastery," and "management." Only in terms of "affect" do open classrooms seem superior. Westbury concludes that new "technologies" are needed which promote control of coverage, mastery, and management in open classrooms, and he affirms that such control can be made consistent with a kind of "intuitionist" epistemology or an epistemology of questioning suggested by Polanyi and Dewey. Clearly, such epistemological questions are of crucial importance for advocates of open education. However,

while these studies directed toward the effects of open education or alternative curricula thus raise important issues, they also illustrate what is true of the literature at large: they compare the effects of only two broadly defined alternatives, traditional and open, rather than comparing the effects of a full range of carefully defined and differentiated alternative curricula.

A third general concern which is present in a relatively small proportion of the literature devoted to open education and alternatives is about the kinds of questions we have mentioned above, those dealing with the desirability and the workability of such alternatives. These questions may or may not be the dominating concern of a study. For instance, Rathbone (1973) identifies and explicates four organizational features of open education: space, time, grouping, and instruction, but he acknowledges that conflicts may arise over whether or to what extent teachers or students do the organizing. In discussing this point he suggests, "yet to understand the approach of most open education teachers to the issue of setting explicit curricular objectives, one must bear in mind that it is perfectly possible to maintain rather fixed ultimate goals, while at the same time allowing considerable daily flexibility with regard to short-term objectives" (p. 534). We cannot suggest that Rathbone is correct in this conclusion without considerably further inquiring into the kind of ultimate goals he has in mind, but here he has explicitly raised a fundamental question about the nature of choice and control. Later in the paper he raises still another central question, suggesting that openness in itself may be dysfunctional for some students and that open education, therefore, may not be the only appropriate curricular model. Such questions clearly are the dominating concern of Friedlander (1975), who suggests that both open and traditional

classrooms are spread along a humane-inhumane continuum:

> I have been in some open classrooms that seemed like the blessed ideal of what schools should be like in terms of superior, humane teaching and learning; and I have been in open classrooms that could be compared only to the back wards of an unreformed mental hospital. Likewise, I have also been in traditional classrooms that could be described in very much the same fashion, at both ends of the scale. (pp. 466-467)

He further suggests that there may be great differences among students in their need for structure, particularly differences in temperament, and recommends that students be given a choice about kinds of classrooms plus the freedom to move back and forth on the basis of their experience. He concludes:

> Ultimately, the process of formulating, conducting, and interpreting open education research must come to grips with the question of values. . . . Where open classrooms are established as a school-wide policy without offering a choice, they are an invitation to disappointment. (p. 467)

Questions dealing with this third general concern are also discussed in articles not directly a part of the literature on open education. Hunt (1975) suggests that a wide variety of student selected tasks may be a principal basis for open classrooms or alternative curricula but that the effects on classroom atmosphere of the systems of beliefs of teachers may be even more important. At the very best, he suggests that open education will not be an improvement unless teachers are given the opportunity to develop the art of fostering and implementing it. Kelly (1975) points out how any curriculum consists of aesthetic dimensions which students respond to by developing personal meanings, but within a range governed by a context and by the nature of the curriculum. Still, since any meaning has a personal dimension, Kelly notes, "linear logical contingency may be inappropriate in 'open' curricula based on principals' [teachers' and students'] perceptions, motifs, and meanings of experience." (pp. 94-95) Willis and Allen (1976), investigating the dimensions and patterns of students' responses to curricula, report that although some common patterns emerge, students respond to curricula with

considerable diversity and individuality. For instance, on only one occasion of the thirty-nine sampled did all nine or ten students in the same classroom respond roughly in common (in terms of two dimensions, involvement and elation) to common curricular structures. Possibly this finding indicates that teachers are faced with a perhaps hopeless and ridiculous task if they attempt to discern and meet student needs on a daily basis within a single curricular alternative, even if that alternative is open education. Finally, Apple and King (1976) suggest that the social as well as the individual meaning of school experience is problematic. They raise a host of questions about how schools may serve to reinforce existing institutional arrangments in society, particularly those which serve as a means of social control. Could, therefore, open educators be rebelling against the institutionalization of social control in the traditional classroom? Will they eventually become coopted by such institutionalization in their own classrooms? Such questions are difficult, but surely open education and alternative curricula will neither be humane nor of social value if they serve in the long run merely to replicate, rather than to improve, the prevailing culture.

The kinds of questions raised especially by Apple and King lead directly into the fourth general concern, which is identified with real sophistication in only a very small proportion of the literature on open education and alternative curricula. This concern is with what we might call metacriticism and ideology. For instance, Denton (1975) suggests that in general the hopes of open educators are genuine and well founded, but that sharing the same world view as traditional educators and mostly ignoring history and epistemology, they tell the teacher little that is new, merely to be a better applied psychologist or sociologist or to concentrate on affect rather than cognition. Nonetheless, despite these failures in the movement, Denton sees

open educators groping their way from calculative, reductionistic thinking toward meditative thinking and understanding. Yet, to give substance to their longings, they must develop a new world view or myth, Denton believes, one he describes as akin to religious, "a new mode of perception, a mode which brings the sacramental world of participation into view." (p. 405)

Perhaps the best expression of this new myth, ideology, or world view for which open educators search is by Macdonald (1974). Basically, this "transcendental development ideology" is a way of linking and doing justice to the structures of both the outer world and one's inner experience, although neither kind of structure is regarded as linear or fixed. Macdonald suggests that the aim of education should be a "centering" of the person in the world; "centering," he notes, "is a human experience facilitated in many ways by a religious attitude when this attitude encompasses the search to find our inner being, or to complete one's awareness of wholeness and meaning as a person." (p. 104) In this sense, the curriculum itself becomes a transaction between the person and the outer world facilitating the kind of implicit understanding Macdonald describes as "indwelling" (p. 113), an understanding which is also a direct engagement with the world.

We submit that the literature we have reviewed represents an intelligent approach to the concerns described, but, virtually buried within the welter of generally weaker material that has appeared in recent years, it still leaves much work to be done in alleviating the shortcomings we have identified. We repeat that the greatest single failure of the current movement for alternative curricula is the failure to provide individual students with a broad range of clearly differentiated curricular alternatives which may be freely chosen according to individual purposes. As a partial corrective we offer, next, a brief description of three basic arrangements for

curricular alternatives and of our suggestions that these alternatives can be differentiated on the basis of the choices they permit, first, in determining a curriculum and, second, in carrying out a curriculum.

A Model

The primary theoretical considerations for differentiating alternative curricula can be inferred from a general model developed by Joseph C. Grannis (1972).[2] Originally published in 1967, this essay explicating the general model thus represents one of the earliest efforts directed toward providing insight into the most recent open educational movement in this country. Grannis identifies three specific and prototypical models that American schools have been based upon. These he calls the "family" school, the "factory" school, and the "corporation" school. While perhaps few, if any, pure examples of each of these prototypes actually exist, the three models clearly embody fundamentally distinct curricular and educational alternatives. Basically put, the educational activities in each of these kinds of schools are patterned on the social relationships which exist in the kind of institution from which that prototype derives its name. Grannis's main point is that schools can be organized according to a variety of social models.

The family school was originally described by John Dewey in The School and Society. It arose in colonial America as the school took on more and more of the functions that had traditionally been carried out by the family. Nonetheless, the institution of the school was not sharply distinct from the institution of the family, and schooling was carried on in many of the same patterns and for many of the same reasons inherent in family life in an agrarian society. The ideal home and the ideal school

2. Joseph C. Grannis, "The School as a Model of Society," originally published in Harvard Graduate School of Education Association Bulletin 21, no. 2 (Fall, 1967): 15-27.

were both miniature laboratories where the child could carry on under friendly guidance inquiry into problems arising initially from his practical concerns. The school existed primarily to extend and deepen the inquiry in ways which were not readily accessible in the home.

As Grannis points out, the main advantage of this kind of school is seemingly that it enhances "the integrity of the child's self-concept in relation to other individuals and to the world around him" (p. 150), and, therefore,

> Our terming this a family model emphasizes the intimate manner of the children's learning with and from each other, and the teacher's nurturing role, as one who shares with the children certain interests and occupations, who provides materials and settings for the children's growth and who facilitates the children's solving of problems that develop essentially out of their own life in the environment created for them. (p. 148)

Cremin (1964) describes a number of outstanding schools that were essentially family schools, such as Marietta Pierce Johnson's Organic School in the early 1900's in Fairhope, Alabama. (pp. 147-153)

The factory school arose out of America's response to industrialization and urbanization, and this model we all are familiar with. Grannis describes it unsympathetically:

> Students in a factory school classroom are generally found working on identical material at a uniform pace. Identical grading standards are presumed to be applied to all the students, though in practice there are great discrepancies in their application to different students, or in their application to different performances by one and the same student on various occasions. Much of the work is assign and recite, and the pattern of dialogue is often rote teaching. Students in the factory school do not get to see the teacher "do things" that matter to the teacher himself, except teach, nor do they see the teacher working on his own questions. (p. 150

Students are encouraged to think in terms of a crude standardization of

products, and in terms of effort, reward, and competition. Collaboration is very limited, and a punitive atmosphere prevails. Clearly, the factory school is still a dominant model in American education today, existing in relatively pure form at least in the composite pictures drawn of urban classrooms by reformers and critics.

The corporation school arose out of and is in effect an imitation of the increasing rationalization and bureacratization of forms of organization in contemporary life. According to Grannis, the corporation school is relatively impersonal; it is characterized by decision-making hierarchies, differentiated staffing, and the use of specialized skills and technology. It includes both team teaching and non-graded characteristics. Yet,

> While team-teaching alone does not necessarily recognize the different interests and capacities of students, it does do so when combined with a vertically non-graded scheme. This is especially true if the scheme does not simply locate the students along various straight-line continua, but allows them to diverge and to concentrate more in one area of study than in another. The corporation school tends to develop an elaborately differentiated scheme for evaluating and reporting students' progress, and it often involves the students themselves in evaluation of their progress. It sets up contracts with individual students for their work. Students and teachers are grouped in numerous ways for various purposes, and complex schedules evolve to allocate the time and resources of the school. (p. 153)

Grannis believes that there are two crucial questions that must be asked about this type of school, "How much and what kind of control do the students themselves have over their activities? And what kinds of feelings and attachments develop between the students and the teachers and among the students themselves?" (pp. 153-154) It does seem clear that the corporation school may promote, at the very least, detached interpersonal relationships, and perhaps, at worst, outright alienation

and other forms of severe, contemporary social malaise. Perhaps the best examples of corporation schools are many of the modern, comprehensive elementary and secondary schools which sprang up in affluent suburban communities during the 1950's and 1960's.

Grannis's three prototypical models represent a broad range of educational alternatives and, we think, curricular alternatives. Today, educators who are concerned with promoting such things as diversity, cultural pluralism, innovation, and open or informal practices are generally attempting to move away from the factory model A major question that remains, however, is whether this change will be predominantly toward the family or toward the corporation model. Our observations have convinced us that often the aspirations and sometimes the rhetoric of such educators are consistent with the family model but that many times the organizational forms and specific classroom practices adopted are consistent with the corporation model, indeed when there is any real change at all.

The difficulties of putting into practice a full range of real educational alternatives are thus not to be underestimated; nonetheless, as we have suggested, there seem to be two principal criteria upon which to clearly differentiate the curricular alternatives implicit in the specific models identified by Grannis. These are the degree of choice each model permits the individual student, first, in determining the curriculum and, second, in carrying out the curriculum, Put a slightly different way, these alternatives can be differentiated on the basis of the degree of freedom they permit the student in originating the curriculum and in selecting the methodology for realizing the curriculum.

In the factory school the student is in a position analogous to a

worker in factory. Neither the student nor the worker ordinarily participates directly in deliberations concerning either the general purposes of the organization or the specific conditions under which individuals presumable contribute toward the fulfillment of those purposes. Both are in essentially a "take it or leave it" situation; only the factory worker can quit his job, whereas most students are bound by compulsory attendance laws.

The corporation school permits the student some freedom to act in accordance with his own interests, but usually this freedom is confined to decisions concerning methodology. Just as an employee of a complex modern corporation ordinarily has little say in determining general purposes, the student rarely has a voice in setting curricular norms, although both employee and student may be relatively free to reach specified norms in ways of their own choosing. The curriculum of the corporation school, then, is ordinarily selected primarily according to a social needs criterion, and even when an individual needs criterion is invoked, the school rarely makes the student an active partner in deciding what he needs to know or do.

To the extent to which the family school can be based upon perhaps somewhat idealized relationships within a harmonious family, the student is an active participant in setting both purposes and methods of realizing those purposes. Furthermore, within a family group, members ordinarily have a more direct say and a more active interest in jointly deciding purposes and methods than do members of a relatively impersonal organization. Additionally, family membership may promote democratic and flexible decision-making, for family decisions can be made or changed personally, even whimsically. Decisions can be made with reasonable dispatch, and changes, even failures, are subjected to less harsh sanctions than are changes within bureacratized organizations.

Given Grannis's descriptions of these three models of schools, and given the differences in freedom of choice about curricula permitted the student by these models, on what basis can we recommend that these models represent a range of alternative curricula that be made available to students within any district, any school, even any classroom? How can such alternatives exist within the same classroom? Is not the family model, which seems to maximize choice and autonomy, superior to the other two?

These are difficult and important questions, but they can be answered both clearly and incisively, we think, by considering that we have thus far been describing choice at two different levels. It should be clear that within the three models there are differing degrees of choice about originating and carrying out the curriculum available to the student; this point should present no difficulty. However, whereas Goodlad suggests that "self-selected, open ends and means, including the freedom of not deliberately choosing" represent basically a fourth alternative (to his previous three, which seem to correspond closely to Grannis's three models), we believe this kind of freedom is an indispensible and encompassing context within which any decisions about specific models must be made. This contextual freedom is the freedom <u>within</u> which - not <u>about</u> which - real choices of distinct curricular alternatives are possible. In effect, unless the student has the freedom of choosing or not choosing among well differentiated models of curricular alternatives, choices about specific curricular ends and means which may be permitted within any one model are largely hollow.

It is sometimes difficult for us to understand why anyone who has achieved a measure of autonomy or developed the habit of thoughtful reflection about his decisions might freely choose a model in which curricular ends and means are prescribed for him, yet many people do gain added control over their

lives by freely submitting themselves to such situations. Perhaps this is a paradox about the nature of freedom upon which freedom is built. It seems, then, that none of Grannis's three models for curricular alternatives is necessarily either ethically or practically superior to the other two for any one person as long as a context permitting freely choosing among them is present.

As a practical metter, this means that any teacher might make available within any classroom a full range of curricular alternatives (although this is by no means easy to do) and carefully consult with students about how they wish to choose among them. Such choice might also be between alternative classrooms within a single school or alternative schools within a single district. While in describing the factory school Grannis has described some of the worst features in how what we might now call traditional education often has been carried out, it is thus by no means certain that most or any of these features are present in traditional education done well. Recalling Friedlander's remark about the humaneness and inhumaneness of both open and traditional classrooms, we also recall many teachers who, in situations that permitted students no real choice of curricular ends or means, still with considerable gracefulness carried out their role, skillfully, sensitively, and sympathetically describing and sometimes altering the curriculum. Traditional education done well, we submit, may be as likely as open education to promote individual autonomy, but it is most likely to be done well and it can be done completely ethically only in the presence of a context which permits it to be freely chosen. Perhaps the most "open" classroom is, then, one which encompasses all three of Grannis's alternatives. Providing a context of freedom and a full range of curricular alternatives differentiated as we have described is therefore what the movement for alternative curricula needs to concentrate on, not on how specific curricula are organized.

Grannis's model of three prototypical schools provides a means of clearly differentiating curricular alternatives according to the degree of choice each alternative permits the student in originating and in carrying out the curriculum. The prototypes themselves, as we have explicated them, assume that students will have either nearly complete freedom or nearly no freedom in choosing in these two matters. In practice, of course, a great many more than these three prototypical alternatives are possible, for students will have varying degrees of freedom of choice. For instance, it is possible to have a fourth alternative in which students largely determine the curriculum but have little say in how it is carried out or implemented.

Some Practical Considerations

To these essentially theoretical considerations can be added more practical considerations by posing questions concerning what practitioners actually need to know in operationalizing these alternatives for curricula and in matching students with appropriate alternatives or in helping students choose appropriate alternatives. We think these practical considerations fall into four general groups: (1)assumptions about knowledge, human nature, and values, (2)specific operational methods employed in instruction and in discerning educational needs, abilities, and desires of students, (3)organizational characteristics of such things as time, space, materials, and subject matter, and (4)assumptions about and uses of evaluation. We also admit to some dismay whenever we find attempts to differentiate alternative curricula on the basis of one or two of these general groupings only.

Let us now consider how these practical considerations apply to the three prototypes for alternative curricula identified within Grannis's general model. Although as actually employed in schools there is a great deal of overlap between these practical considerations, we think they can be reasonably used by teachers in identifying alternative curricula in operation.

Among the most important assumptions that must be made by an educator are those dealing with the nature of knowledge, with human nature, and with the sources of value of the educational process. In very general terms, the educator most likely to advocate the factory school tends to see knowledge as basically fixed (although probably accumulating) and, therefore, to view some bits of knowledge as more worth knowing than others. He tends to see human nature as fixed and requiring direct intervention to insure many forms of desirable learning, perhaps by increasing "motivation" or by deliberately delimiting some freedoms. He tends to see the value of the ends toward

which education is directed as being more important than the value of the educational process itself, and these ends he probably views as predominantly utilitarian and socially determined. In the factory school, then, the curriculum is subject matter based on academic disciplines and predetermined. Most other values are imposed by society and the structure of the school. All values are fixed and hierarchical, and students must be molded into conformity.

The educator advocating the corporation school probably tends to agree that knowledge is fixed. However, he probably also views human nature as such that students have special interests and can take some initiative in recognizing them. The nature of society, however, tends to predominate as a source and shaper of values. In the corporation school, then, the curriculum is still largely based on academic disciplines and predetermined, but the utilitarian demands of society may also shape the curriculum. Basically, the student is expected to learn how to fit into society (hence, to adopt society's values), but the school as an institution recognizes more than one way by which the student may accomplish this.

The educator most likely to advocate the family school probably tends to see knowledge as changing or at least suggests that we can never really know which bits of knowledge are most worth knowing. He tends to see human nature as such that the individual is sufficiently motivated or able to use most freedoms to accomplish desirable learning without much direct (although perhaps with much indirect) intervention. He tends to see the intrinsic values of the educational means as at least as important as the value of the ends, and the means are usually viewed as including intellectual, social, emotional, and aesthetic values and as being predominantly individually determined. In the family school, then, the curriculum may include subject matter based on academic disciplines or shaped by the nature of society, but

the curriculum is not predetermined. The functions of the school tend to center on the individual student and his development. Since both students and the process of knowing are idiosyncratic, the curriculum is emergent.

While differences in assumptions may in themselves make comparatively little difference in educational practice, a key point is for the educator to make operational decisions consistent with the assumptions he holds. Again in very general terms, the educator most likely to advocate the factory school usually sees his role as one of insuring desirable learning through a process of relatively direct intervention. The factory school, therefore, adopts consistent operational specifics and usually focuses on academic learning. For instance, students are grouped to facilitate such learning and are subject to non-promotion for failure to demonstrate accomplishment in academics, usually as measured by standardized tests. Assignments are made to whole groups of students in terms of sequences of subject matter. Recitation is the predominant method, and rote learning often emphasized. Teachers only teach. In general, a competitive, authoritarian, and punitive atmosphere may prevail as adults make all decisions.

The educator advocating the corporation school may see desirable learning best insured through operational methods relying on somewhat less direct intervention for all students. The corporation school may, therefore, provide a series of different operations meant to lead basically to the same goal; i.e., various and flexible forms of grouping and instruction, team teaching, etc. In general, the corporation school provides a hierarchical structure of decision-making consistent with established institutional goals and attempts to bureaucratically coordinate specialized functions of its staff. It may also adopt specific procedures meant to promote development in terms of several hierarchies (cognitive, moral) as well to promote academic learning.

The educator advocating the family school sees his role as quite complicated, for through a process of indirect intervention only he attempts to insure less but to suggest more than other educators. The family school, therefore, usually adopts a wide variety of operational specifics which are intended to promote the quality of experiencing, as well as progress in developmental hierarchies and in academic learning. For instance, these methods usually center around activities selected by students in terms of their own interests. Teachers, also, may engage in their own tasks, with opportunities provided for students to join them. Collaboration between students and between students and teachers is encouraged. In general, any method is seen as legitimate which serves to meet, broaden, or refine interests consistent with general and flexible views of institutional purposes.

The organizational characteristics of such things as time, space, materials, and subject matter also tend to vary considerably between these three kinds of schools consistent with the varying assumptions of different educators. In the factory school subject matter is broken down into parts and arranged sequentially. Blocks of time are alloted for group study of each part of the sequence, and materials are chosen to reflect both the sequencing of parts and the time alloted to each part. Space itself is similarly structured, being organized to compartmentalize groups of students and to encourage each member of any one group to focus on the same task at the same time.

In the corporation school, time, space, materials, and subject matter are usually arranged more flexibly, to permit to a certain extent some variation in the strictly logical sequencing of subject matter. Subject matter is still broken down and arranged sequentially, but ordinarily several different sequences may be present. Time is similarly arranged (for instance,

modular scheduling) to permit individual students to proceed through a sequence of their choosing at some kind of suitable pace. Space and materials are similarly selected and structured to encourage an "individualized" approach to progress through set sequences, although often group instruction also exists in this school.

In the family school, seldom are time, space, materials, or subject matter broken down and sequenced except by an individual for his own purposes. Materials are ordinarily chosen to encourage a wide variety of approaches to diverse areas of subject matter. While group instruction may exist in the family school, groups ordinarily come into existence spontaneously and informally, to pursue some common interest. Membership of groups fluctuates, and groups tend to drop out of existence when common interests are satisfied. Any partitioning of space or time is ordinarily intended to maximize the ability of individuals to pursue their interests consistently with the purposes and assumptions of the school.

Since different assumptions in themselves do not necessarily make differences in practice, and since in practice methods and modes of organizations sometimes overlap, specific assumptions about and uses of evaluation by the educator are another means of comparing the alternative curricula embodied in Grannis's three specific models. In the factory school, the educator assumes that the best education is the most efficient in terms of promoting retention of the predetermined curriculum, and he thus evaluates by determining the degree to which outcomes specified as desirable prior to practice are realized after practice. Thus the factory school stresses identical standards and the quantity and rate of work a student produces. Ordinarily, a few students are permitted to set the pace for each group while at least some students who are particularly unable to

keep up are expected to fail.

In the corporation school, the considerations we have previously described permit considerably more flexibility in how evaluation can be conducted in practice. Basically, this means that the corporation school ordinarily makes some effort to appraise the individual students' rate of progress through the individual tasks he may be engaged in. However, aside from this rather minor difference, we are able to find no essential differences whatsoever between the factory and corporation schools in either specific assumptions about or uses of evaluation.

While the educator who advocates the family school obviously needs carefully considered ideas of what constitutes desirability, he cannot be consistent with his assumptions about knowledge, human nature, and values and still rely on the ordinary mode of evaluation. For instance, the practical considerations listed above represent a vast and not necessarily finite range of concern to be dealt with. It would be naive to suppose that all such concerns can be specified, kept in mind, or put into practice simultaneously. It would be even more naive to suppose that so they should or that some can be realized without creating circumstances that prevent the realization of others. So, this educator assumes that at best evaluation is an approximation, but one which felicitously used can still help realize his values. Therefore, in the family school, evaluation incorporates a very large number of checklists and multiple-criteria for monitoring the flow of almost all specifics within the range of concern of the evaluator. During practice, he constantly refocuses his attention as circumstances and his own judgment seem to dictate and modifies practices primarily to head off potentially negative situations which the process of monitoring has alerted him to. He constantly reformulates his evaluation as the process unfolds but finalizes

his judgment only in light of consideration of a broad and often unpredicted range of outcomes, both positive and negative. In this way, the family school is able to include within an assessment a far broader range of criteria than either of the other two schools and to use these criteria in a flexible way to modify practice consistent with the purpose of maximizing the desirable results of student choice in determining and in carrying out the curriculum. In practice, this means that the family school can simultaneously stress both quality of work and idiosyncratic and personal standards.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we think this study is of educational significance for four major readons. First, identifying and differentiating three basic prototypes for curricular alternatives and providing an operational description consistent with each provides a theoretical cornerstone for clarifying and expanding curriculum rationales and an operational cornerstone for educational practice. Second, the study tends to refocus research in and talk about alternative curricula on primary considerations. In one sense it makes such research possible, for it makes available a means for clearly differentiating (hence, clearly comparing) authentic alternatives. Third, it tends to shift curriculum policy from piecemeal assembly of alternatives to broader vision about the social purposes of education. Fourth, it tends to help make possible and to be consistent with a full range of plausible alternative choices inherent in a healthy educational and cultural pluralism.

We have suggested that the specific forms of organization of curricula which are often stressed in the literature on alternatives are not good differentia of real alternatives. We have suggested that the best differentia are the degrees of choice permitted the student in practice and within a specific institutional context in determining the curriculum and in carrying out the curriculum. The nature of freedom is far more basic in determining alternatives than are specific organizational forms.

The alternatives we have identified are three points along a continuum. The needs and purposes of any school system or any one student may or may not be met by any one of these three; therefore, we have insisted that educators should provide a broad range of curricular alternatives which may be freely chosen according to individual purposes. We have not suggested that all alternatives are of equal value, but each may have some value

within a context that permits free choice among them.

Ultimately, how educators treat alternative curricula depends on how educators treat the much broader issue of human freedom. About freedom Macdonald (1972) has written:

> Freedom is not possible without choice, and choice is impossible without viable alternatives...In the end freedom may be, as Dewey asserted many times, a mental attitude. Yet this attitude cannot develop without the existence of many opportunities for choosing and the leeway for exploring and experimenting along the way. (p. 7)

In this paper we have merely touched the surface of the nature of freedom. What matters for alternative curricula, and for many other reasons, is how educators treat the nature of human freedom in the long run.

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